

Request for Task Order under
NIH Information and Communications Services Contract

RFTOP#3

Title of Task Order: Issues in Alcohol Awareness

A. Statement of Work

I. Background Information

Alcohol abuse and addiction represent the nation's largest and most devastating public health problem. Nearly 14 million Americans suffer from alcohol abuse and alcoholism, and more than 100,000 deaths result from alcohol annually. The economic cost to society of alcohol abuse is \$185 billion annually, related to lost productivity, motor vehicle crashes, and crime.

Despite these staggering statistics, communicating accurate, objective information about alcohol presents a variety of challenges. In many cases, because alcohol is so tightly interwoven into the social fabric of America, some adults remain apathetic and underestimate its destructive capabilities and burden on society. Conversely, among those who take an active interest in the issue, many hold firm, personal beliefs, which bias their perspectives for or against alcohol. On one hand, many are persuaded by the claims that associate alcohol with fun, enjoyment, and the "good life." On the other hand, many harbor religious and philosophical biases against alcoholic products. Taken together, these three groups all contribute to a public discourse on alcohol that is often characterized by a noticeable absence of research-based, objective information.

In some cases, this characteristic extends to professional arenas as well, with troubling consequences. In the public policy area, many decision makers rely on anecdotal information and unsubstantiated statistics when formulating national and local policy. Meanwhile, some in the treatment community resist using promising new medications and fail to look to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) for research-based information. In addition, the Institute is continually challenged to educate scientific researchers about its role as a potential source of funding.

As part of its mandate, NIAAA has a responsibility to communicate science-based research information to policy makers and the public and to encourage an objective national discussion on the alcohol issue. Recently, all Institutes at NIH have been encouraged to expand and enhance their public liaison functions. As NIAAA continues to work to meet these outreach and public liaison challenges, its efforts remain relatively small, given the size of its budget in relation to the scope of the problem. As a result, the Institute must maximize its awareness activities and leverage its outreach resources wisely.

II. Objectives

The goals of this contract are to increase the awareness of NIAAA's messages and research priorities, as well as the alcohol issue in general. These objectives will be accomplished through a coordinated series of identity-building and awareness activities that seek to capitalize on outreach opportunities to convey science-based messages about alcohol.

The project will target major stakeholders in the public health arena, constituencies in the alcohol field, local and national policy makers, and the general public.

III. Services to be Performed

A. General Requirements

1. Independently, and not as an agent of the Government, the Contractor shall furnish the necessary labor, materials, supplies, equipment, and services (except as otherwise specified herein) to perform the work set forth below.
2. The Contractor shall provide office equipment sufficient for regular communication with NIAAA, specifically to receive and provide feedback in a timely fashion.
3. All work under this contract shall be monitored by the Government Project Officer.
4. In order to provide adequate project support requested in this contract, the contractor must have access to a full complement of experts needed to conduct an identity and awareness project, including but not limited to public education campaign planners and writers, graphics specialists, public relations and media relations experts, broadcast specialists, and facilities needed to produce any type of materials called for in this project.

All activities associated with this contract must be approved by NIAAA beforehand and NIAAA reserves the right to modify any materials and/or strategies during the course of the project.

In general, the role of the contractor in this proposal is to provide creative, appropriate strategic counsel to NIAAA in support of this outreach effort and to plan, manage, and execute outreach activities according to the direction of Institute. This involves 1) identifying outreach opportunities to communicate NIAAA messages to selected audiences; 2) creating, with input and guidance from NIAAA, a calendar of activities for each year; and 3) planning, managing, executing, and evaluating the specific activities.

B. Specific Requirements

The Contractor will perform the specific tasks outlined below:

Task I - Identifying Outreach Opportunities

The initial task for the contractor is to assist NIAAA in identifying outreach opportunities to increase alcohol awareness. Soon after the initiation of the contract, the contractor will submit to NIAAA a list of potential communication opportunities for the coming year. These opportunities

may be created by 1) conferences and programs organized by OPLPL or other NIAAA divisions; 2) national alcohol- related events and holidays; and/or 3) meetings in which the NIAAA Director or other Senior NIAAA staff are key participants.

In developing this list, NIAAA expects that the contractor will utilize a variety of sources, consultations with in-house experts, and all relevant trade publications. The contractor will also consult a list of upcoming NIAAA conferences and meetings, to be provided by the Project Officer.

Task II - NIAAA Calendar/Strategic Plan

Following the submission of the Outreach Opportunities list, the contractor and Project Officer will jointly identify the specific opportunities to be included in the NIAAA Calendar/Strategic Plan. They will also discuss the general types of activities appropriate for each opportunity. The contractor will then develop and submit a draft calendar for review. With comments from the Project Officer, the contractor will finalize the calendar and begin planning the individual activities.

The advantages of the calendar are many. Because the activities will require advance preparation and coordination with many different partners, this calendar will be an effective strategic planning tool for both the public liaison and communications offices. The primary advantage of the calendar is that it will summarize, in advance, an entire year of activities, total costs for each effort, specific tactics to be employed, and outreach goals for each effort. In this way, the calendar will help ensure that 1) sufficient time and resources are devoted to each effort and 2) the individual activities coalesce into a cohesive overall plan. With its evaluation of each activity, the calendar will also help SCB and OPLPL determine where future resources should be placed.

This calendar of activities will also serve as a strategic plan. As such, the contractor will ensure that it provides a rationale, description, strategies and tactics, and total costs of each activity inclusive of all direct and indirect costs (including labor). It must also include a time line for the development, implementation, and evaluation of all activities. The activities in the calendar must be designed to complement each other as well as other Institute outreach efforts. They must be spaced periodically throughout the year in order to create a consistent level of effort.

NIAAA anticipates the planning, execution, and evaluation of 4 to 5 distinct outreach activities each year, depending on the nature and scope of each. The contractor will recommend the number and scope of the activities each year, but the final decision will remain with NIAAA. A small amount of money will be maintained in a reserve activities fund to capitalize on unanticipated communications opportunities throughout the year or for additional research or reporting needs.

Task III - Planning, Management, Execution, and Evaluation of Activities on NIAAA Calendar/Strategic Plan

After the calendar is approved, the contractor will be responsible for the management, execution, and evaluation of each activity. The contractor will also be responsible for the development of all products necessary to carry out the selected activities. These activities and products may include, but are not limited to, meeting planning and logistics; development of graphics, news stories, public materials, materials for constituency groups, and strategic planning assistance for NIAAA staff. The drafts of all products will be reviewed by the Project Officer and all required Institute and Department clearance processes will be followed.

NIAAA anticipates that there will be an ongoing, informal dialogue during this time in which the contractor will keep the Project Officer updated on the status of the activities and apprised of any significant news or developments in the marketing, advertising, alcohol, public health, communications, or other relevant fields.

Six weeks after the conclusion of each activity, the contractor will submit a summary of the effort and a brief process evaluation and assessment. This evaluation and assessment will include a short description of the effort and the rationale behind it, an outline of the scope and size of the effort, and feedback on its effectiveness including reactions from participants and, if appropriate, the total number of media impressions.

Six months into the contract year, the contractor will submit recommendations for the upcoming year's calendar. This submission will be followed by a meeting to identify the final list of outreach opportunities and provide general direction to the contractor. NIAAA expects that the contractor will incorporate lessons learned from the previous year into the planning of subsequent years, and all parties should recognize that no activities will automatically be carried over from one year to the next.

Following this meeting, the contractor will create a draft calendar for the subsequent year and, upon receiving comments from the Project Officer, will finalize it. This process will be repeated in all years of the contract. At the conclusion of each contract year, the contractor will provide a short year-end summary of all activities, including any relevant qualitative and quantitative results. At any time, the contractor may suggest changes to this schedule if alternative activities are preferable. However, as in other matters, the final decision will remain with the Project Officer.

For the first year of the contract, NIAAA will require that **three** of the activities are planned and developed according to the outline in this proposal. Two of these activities, entitled Seasonal Outreach, will capitalize on national holidays or events in which alcohol plays a major role. Seasonal Outreach activities merge relevant alcohol-related statistical information regarding the season, pictorial displays of those statistics (i.e. infographs), and consumer tips sheets into a low cost, effective media package. In year 1, these efforts should focus on New Year's Eve and Prom Night, respectively.

The third required activity for the Year I Calendar will be a Policy makers Information Session. While the details of this effort can be finalized after the contract is awarded, the contractor should be aware of this requirement to hold some type of event that will offer an opportunity for NIAAA scientists and/or grantees to present their research to an assembled group of decision

makers.

B. PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Weight</u>
<u>1. Understanding the Problem</u> The contractor must demonstrate: C An understanding of the mandate of the NIAAA, the needs of the Institute in information dissemination, outreach, and Public Liaison and the role of the Office of Policy, Legislation, and Public Liaison (OPLPL) in serving those needs. An understanding of the goals, objectives, and tasks required in this contract, including knowledge of what problems are likely to be encountered and proposed means of dealing with such problems. An awareness of the substance and complexity of alcohol issues in society and the role of a public health awareness project in addressing those issues.	<u>10 Points</u>
<u>2. Technical Approach</u> The technical approach should be delineated in sufficient detail to demonstrate soundness, practicability, feasibility and completeness. The proposal should fully address the aspects of performing each task. The proposal should contain a sound work plan to complete the activities called for in the statement of work and realistic project schedules, including milestones and deliverables. <u>3. Personnel</u> The contractor's proposed personnel will be evaluated on the qualifications, expertise, and demonstrated experience necessary to plan and implement all tasks. Staff must have: C Expertise and demonstrated ability to plan, manage, and execute awareness campaigns in the area of public health, preferably at NIH C Familiarity with NIH and its political, scientific, and budgetary challenges for communications planners, and the ability to achieve maximum results with minimum resources C Knowledge of the social marketing, wellness, and alcohol marketing fields. C Facility and expertise in utilizing multiple communications channels, formats, and strategies C Immediate access to specialized staff talent graphics, media dissemination, and consumer research. Demonstration of adequate staff capability will be through inclusion of resumes, curricula vitae and/or other appropriate information.	<u>30 Points</u> <u>35 Points</u>
<u>4. Corporate Management Capability and Facilities</u>	<u>15 points</u>

Proposals will be evaluated on the: a) adequacy of the proposed management plan, which should show clear lines of authority and responsibility; b) quality control procedures to assure that project goals and milestones will be met in a timely manner; and, c) adequacy of corporate experience in managing projects of similar size, scope and content.

5. Facilities

10 Points

Proposals will be evaluated on the availability and adequacy of required equipment and facilities, such as graphics, audio/video production, consumer and audience research, and mass media distribution mechanisms (such as newswires), as well as any other facilities necessary to complete the tasks outlined in this project.

